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NSC BRIEFING

1 December 1954

CHINESE OFFSHORE ISLANDS

- I. Chinese Communist harassment of Nationalist-held offshore islands expected to continue through winter.

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- A. During most of November Communists concentrated on Tachens group, possibly in effort to induce Nationalist withdrawal.
 - B. There was only minor action against Quemoy and Matsu groups.
 - C. Communists on 26 November conducted naval shelling of Wuchiu, tiny isolated island between Quemoy and Matsu.
 - D. Some possibility of Communist submarine activity in offshore island waters.
- II. Communist amphibious assaults on all three of major offshore groups will remain possible throughout winter, as weather clears for several days at time.

- A. Peiping still appears uncertain, however, as to US intentions as regards defense of these major groups.
- B. Moreover, assaults on Tachens and Quemoys would be costly even against Nationalist opposition alone.

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- III. Of major island groups, Tachens appear most vulnerable to Communist harassment short of invasion, as these islands are at end of Taipei's longest supply line

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(over 200 miles from ports in northern Formosa).

A. Communist air power can hamper Tachen supply by attacks on approaching vessels and one good harbor.

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B. Communists could also hinder supply by artillery fire from islands to north and west.

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C. Sinking of Nationalist destroyer escort near Tachens on 14 November may discourage Taipei from risking further losses of major combat vessels in Tachens area. If so, Tachens and shipping in area would be more vulnerable to Communist naval fire.

D. Communists could also weaken Tachens by repeated bombing and artillery attacks on targets on islands themselves.

E. Short of supplies, and under repeated attacks, morale of Nationalist garrison in Tachens would certainly deteriorate.

F. Deterioration could be hastened by Communist capture of smaller outlying islands to north and south of Tachens--Yushans and Ichiang to

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north, Fishan and Nanchishan to south--most of which were bombed during November.

E. Although current Nationalist intention is to fight for Tachens if necessary, Taipei might decide to withdraw its forces from Tachens if faced with weakening Tachens garrison and loss of smaller nearby islands.

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III
IV
This pattern of Communist harassment could be extended to Matsus and Quemoys.

A.

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First
raid on Matsus by Communist frogman took place 20 November.

B. Quemoys have been shelled intermittently since early November.

IV. Chinese Communist action against Wuchiu island on 26 November greatly exaggerated by press.

~~A. Action did not involve Communist landing-attempt, only shelling by several Chinese Communist gunboats for period of one hour.~~

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C. THIS THIRD SUCH SHELLING IN 1954.

- D. Some question as to why Communists bothered with Wuchia, as of no strategic importance either in itself or as base for attacks?
- E. One speculation is that Communists were trying to draw major Nationalist vessels into submarine trap, in light of recent reports of sub sightings.

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E. Chinese Communist navy believed to have three to six submarines, of coastal and long-range type, based at Tsingtao. These have been in training status and were not believed capable of operating as far from base [redacted]

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